
Local Government Committee

BILL ANALYSIS HB 2388

TITLE OF THE BILL: Providing for the creation, expansion, and setting of boundaries for metropolitan park districts.

Brief Summary:

- Authorizes creation of a metropolitan park district with territory greater than city limits and specifies procedures for ballot proposition.
- Exempts a ballot proposition for creation of a park district from review by a boundary review board if the park district is to include only one or more cities.
- Specifies district is created immediately after certification of majority voter approval and is named after the largest city within the district.
- Specifies for property tax purposes, the boundaries of a new district are established as of June 1 of the year in which the ballot proposition is approved.
- Removes territory from a park and recreation district or service area upon creation of a metropolitan park district incorporating the same area.

SPONSORS: Representative Parlette.

HEARING DATE: Thursday, January 27, 2000.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

FISCAL NOTE: Not Requested.

ANALYSIS PREPARED BY: Caroleen Dineen (786-7156).

BACKGROUND:

A metropolitan park district is authorized to manage parks, parkways and boulevards. One metropolitan park district, the Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma, currently exists in the state.

Metropolitan park districts may be created in cities with a population of at least 5,000. The initial boundaries of a metropolitan park district are the city limits. The park district may later seek to annex adjacent territory. One election is held to determine whether a park district should be created and to elect a board of park district commissioners if the district is in fact created. Five separately elected park district commissioners serve six-year staggered terms.

A metropolitan park district may impose two separate regular property tax levies on all property located in the district: (1) a levy not to exceed 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation; and (2) a levy not to exceed 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. As are other taxing district levies, the metropolitan park district levies are subject to the constitutional 1 percent limitation on property taxes.

SUMMARY:

A metropolitan park district may be created with territory greater than city limits. A metropolitan park district may be proposed for a city with a population of at least 5,000 and additional contiguous territory (incorporated or unincorporated).

The ballot proposition authorizing creation of a metropolitan park district may be initiated by resolution of city legislative authorities or by petition of the area's registered voters. For districts proposed to be created after January 1, 2000, the ballot proposition is submitted if either:

- the legislative authority of each city proposed to be included adopts a resolution proposing the creation of the metropolitan park district; or
- a petition proposing the creation of the metropolitan park district, signed by at least fifteen percent of the registered voters residing in the area proposed to be included, is submitted to the county auditor.

The ballot proposition is submitted to voters within the area proposed to be included in the metropolitan park district and is approved by majority vote. The ballot proposition is submitted at a general or special election occurring at least sixty days after:

- the last city resolution proposing creation is approved;
- the petition proposing creation is certified by the county auditor if no boundary review board exists in the county; or
- the boundary review board reviewing a proposal that includes unincorporated territory is deemed to have approved the proposal, approves the proposal or approves the proposal with modifications.

A proposal to create a metropolitan park district only within a city or cities is not subject to boundary review board review.

A metropolitan park district is created upon certification of election results approving the ballot proposition. A metropolitan park district is named after the largest city included in the park district.

Once a metropolitan park district is created, any territory annexed to a city included within the metropolitan park district is automatically added to the metropolitan park district. The extension of

the park district's boundaries pursuant to a city annexation is not subject to boundary review board review. Any territory included within a park and recreation district or a park and recreation service area is removed if that territory is also included within a newly created metropolitan park district or if the territory is annexed by a metropolitan park district.

For property tax purposes, the boundaries of a new metropolitan park district are established as of June 1 of the year in which the ballot proposition is approved.